



The Sixty-eighth Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
2,773rd Concert

**Moscow String Quartet**

Eugenia Alikhanova and Galina Kokhanovskaya, *violins*

Tatiana Kokhanovskaya, *viola*

Olga Ogranovitch, *cello*

Presented in honor of Women's History Month

March 3, 2010  
Wednesday, 12:10 pm  
West Building Lecture Hall

*Admission free*

## Program

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

*Die Sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze* (1785)

(The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross)

Introduzione

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do

Verily I say unto thee: today shalt thou be with me in paradise

Woman, behold thy son! and thou, behold thy mother!

My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?

I thirst

It is finished

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit

The earthquake

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

*String Trio* (1988)

Three movements without titles

## The Musicians

Described by Alfred Schnittke as “an extraordinary ensemble that distinguishes itself with refined musical style, an unusually beautiful sound and palette of colors, and a tremendous artistic temperament,” the members of the Moscow String Quartet have earned a place among the most distinguished musicians of our times. Graduates of the Moscow Conservatory and Gnessin Musical Institute (Moscow), the members were students of eminent professors, including Yuri Yankelevich, Genrihk Talalian of the Komitas String Quartet, and Valentin Berlinsky of the Borodin Quartet, with whom the quartet continued to study after graduation.

The Moscow String Quartet gained international acclaim after winning the 1978 Leo Weiner International Quartet Competition in Budapest, followed a year later by a triumph at the International Quartet competition in Evian, France. Since then, the Moscow String Quartet has played to consistent critical acclaim in the major concert halls of Europe, including regular performances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Salle Gaveau in Paris, Wigmore Hall in London, the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, and the Academy of Arts in Berlin. In addition, the quartet has appeared in many prestigious festivals, including Berliner Festwochen; the Casals Festivals in Prades and San Juan, Puerto Rico; the Catalonia Festival in Spain; and the Cheltenham, City of London, Newport, and Stratford-upon-Avon Festivals in the United Kingdom. In North America, the quartet has performed in Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Montreal, New York City (Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Frick Collection), Ottawa, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver, and Washington, DC. In 1996 the ensemble was invited by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to perform at a White House Christmas Concert. From 1991 to 1996, the quartet was in residence at the Lamont School of Music in Denver, and in 1997 at the University of Colorado in Denver. The Moscow String Quartet has recorded works by Beethoven, Denisov, Glinka, Haydn, Mozart, Schnittke, and Tchaikovsky, for the MCA, Fine Arts Records, Russian Disk, Channel Classics, and Melodiya labels.

## Program Notes

Originally written for orchestra, Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross* was commissioned in 1785 by a Spanish clergyman for the Good Friday service of a congregation in Cadiz, Spain. After the introductory overture, the priest would preach on the seven final utterances of Christ on the cross. A musical movement would follow each sermon, during which time the congregation could reflect and meditate. The work ends with a finale that evokes the earthquake that is included in the Passion narrative, making nine movements altogether. Haydn also arranged the *Seven Last Words* as an oratorio. In 1787 the composer made an arrangement of its original orchestral version for string quartet, so that people could play it in their homes and in smaller churches. The Latin text is printed under the first violin part in each of the movements, and the syllables fit the notes exactly as if the words of Christ were being sung.

Sofia Asgatovna Gubaidulina was born in 1931 to a Tartar father and a Russian mother in Tschistopol, a small town on the Volga River in the Tartar Republic of the former USSR. She graduated from the Kazan Conservatory in 1954, before transferring to the Moscow Conservatory, where she finished in 1961 as a post-graduate student of Vissarion Shebalin.

In the Soviet period, Gubaidulina earned her living writing film scores, while reserving part of every year for her own compositions. She was attracted early in her career to the modernist enthusiasms of her contemporaries Edison Denisov and Alfred Schnittke, but she emerged with a striking, unique voice with the chamber-orchestral work *Concordanza* (1970). She built up a close circle of performing friends, with whom she shared long periods of improvisation and acoustical experimentation. Out of these experiences came ground-breaking pieces for the accordionist Friedrich Lips, including the frequently played *De Profundis* (1978).

From the late 1970s onwards, Gubaidulina's essentially religious temperament became more and more prevalent in her work. Even when the Soviet government was severely repressing public expression of religious themes, she was writing a violin concerto for Gidon Kremer, *Offertorium* (1980, revised 1986), and *Seven Words* for cello, accordion, and string orchestra (1982, published in the USSR under the non-religious title *Partita*). Since the arrival of greater freedom in Russia, religious themes have become Gubaidulina's overwhelming preoccupation. Many of her religious works are on a large scale, including a cello concerto inspired by a poem about the Last Judgment; an *Alleluia* (1990) for chorus and orchestra; a concerto for cello and chorus for Mstislav Rostropovich; and the colossal *Passion according to Saint John* (2000), a German commission to celebrate the Millennium, which was premiered by the soloists, chorus, and orchestra of the Kirov Opera conducted by Valery Gergiev. Sofia Gubaidulina wrote the *String Trio* of 1988 for the Moscow String Quartet. The work was commissioned by Radio France and is dedicated to the memory of Boris Pasternak.

*Gubaidulina biography excerpted from Encountering Gubaidulina  
by Gerard McBurney; reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes*

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble**

Music by Antosca, Reynolds, and other composers

Presented in honor of

*The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection:*

*Selected Works*

March 7, 2010

Sunday, 6:30 pm

East Building Atrium



**Oni Buchanan, pianist**

Music by women composers of the twenty-first century

Presented in honor of Women's History Month

March 10, 2010

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall



The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm for light refreshments.

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